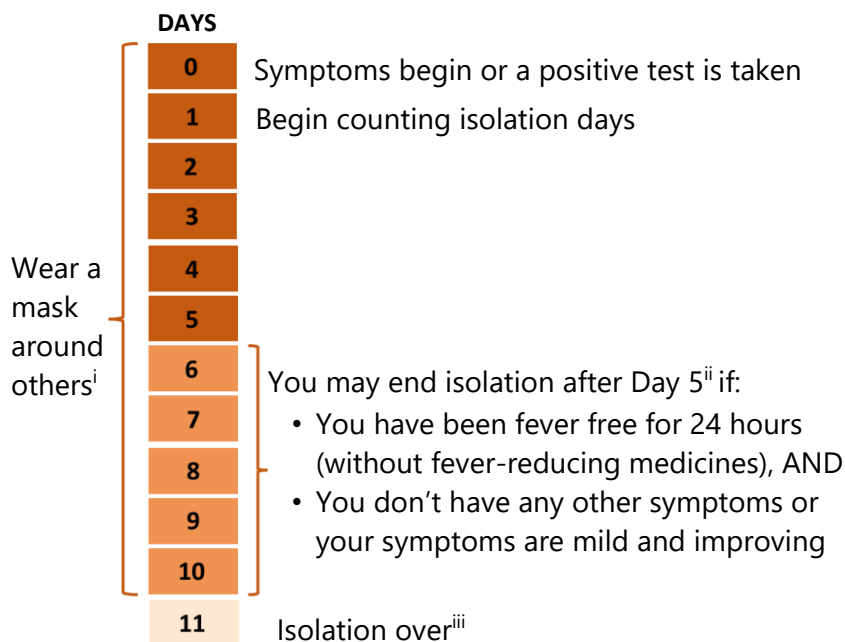# COVID-19:
Isolation Instructions for People with COVID-19

Summary

In Los Angeles County, if you have COVID-19:

❶ **Isolate** (stay home away from others), and

❷ **Wear a well-fitting mask through day 10**, and

❸ **Tell your close contacts that they have been exposed** and should follow instructions for close contacts

You are considered to have COVID-19 if you have a positive test for COVID-19 or a healthcare provider tells you that you have COVID-19.

DAYS

Day	
0	Symptoms begin or a positive test is taken
1	Begin counting isolation days
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	Isolation over[iii]

Wear a mask around others[i]

You may end isolation after Day 5[ii] if:
- You have been fever free for 24 hours (without fever-reducing medicines), AND
- You don't have any other symptoms or your symptoms are mild and improving

i. If you meet the criteria to end isolation after Day 5, you may stop wearing a mask if you have two negative COVID-19 tests in a row that were taken at least a day apart.
ii. LAC DPH *strongly recommends* that you get a negative test for COVID-19 before ending isolation between Day 6-10. If you do test, it is best to use antigen tests (including self-tests) to lower the risk of false positives.
iii. If you still have a fever, stay in isolation until 24 hours after your fever resolves. If you are immunocompromised or had severe COVID-19, talk with your doctor about when you can be around others.

If you have questions, are experiencing homelessness, or are unable to safely isolate at home, call the Public Health COVID Information Line at 1-833-540-0473. Help is available daily from 8:00am to 8:30pm.

Isolate: Stay home and away from others

If you have COVID-19, you should stay home away from others for at least 5 days. You should isolate even if you have no symptoms and/or if you have been vaccinated or infected in the past. Follow the isolation instructions below to protect others.

To count the days:
- Day 0 is the first day of symptoms.
- If you don't have symptoms, Day 0 is when your first positive test was collected. If you go on to get symptoms, restart with Day 0 as the first day of symptoms.

Ending isolation:

You may end isolation after Day 5* (i.e., between Day 6-10) if:
- You have not had a fever for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medicine **AND**
- You don't have any other symptoms, or your symptoms are mild and improving.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
Public Health

*Note: LAC DPH strongly recommends that you get a negative test for COVID-19 before ending isolation between Day 6-10. If you do test, it is best to use antigen tests (including self-tests) to lower the risk of false positives.

If your symptoms of COVID-19 are not improving, you should continue to isolate until your symptoms are improving or until after Day 10.

If you have a condition that weakens your immune system or if you were severely ill with COVID-19 you might need to stay home for longer than 10 days. Talk to your doctor about when you can be around other people.

If your COVID-19 symptoms return or get worse after you end isolation, you may have COVID-19 rebound. Take an antigen test. If you test positive, you should restart isolation at Day 0. Talk to your doctor about your symptoms or concerns.

Wear a well-fitting mask

While in isolation, you must wear a well-fitting mask if there is a need to be in the same room with others. Continue to wear a well-fitting mask when you are indoors around others through Day 10.*

*If you meet the criteria to end isolation after Day 5, you can stop wearing a mask sooner (between Day 6-10) if you have two negative COVID-19 tests in a row that were taken at least a day apart.

Note: when you return to work, you are required to wear a mask at the workplace for a total of 10 days after your positive test. See Return to Work (Non-Healthcare) Summary Table.

To learn which masks offer the best protection, see ph.lacounty.gov/masks.

Tell your close contacts they have been exposed

Tell your close contacts that they could be infected. They should take steps to reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 even if they feel well or are up to date with their vaccines. These steps include masking, testing, and monitoring their health. Give them the instructions which are available in multiple languages at ph.lacounty.gov/covidcontacts.

If you have gotten COVID-19 or passed it on to others at work or school, please tell your workplace or school so that they can take precautions, including recommended testing.

Definition of a Close Contact

A "close contact" is anyone who shared the same indoor airspace as you for at least 15 minutes in 24-hours while you were infectious*.

Examples of indoor airspaces are homes, waiting rooms, and airplanes. An example of 'at least 15 minutes' is being in the same airspace for 5 minutes at 3 different times in a 24-hour period.

*You are considered to be infectious (meaning you can spread COVID-19 to others) from 2 days before your symptoms began until you meet criteria to end isolation. If you test positive for COVID-19 but do not have any symptoms, you are considered to be infectious from 2 days before your test was taken through Day 5.
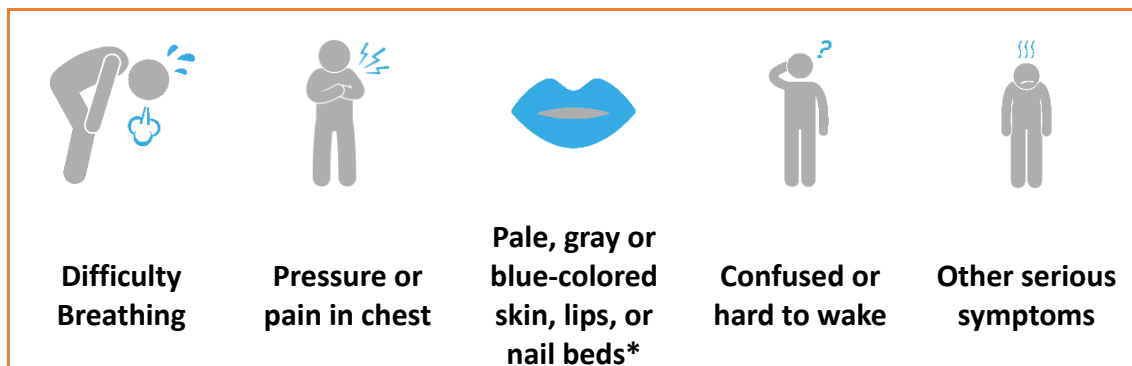

How to isolate – protecting others

- **Stay home except to get medical care.**
  - If you need to leave home to get medical care, wear a well-fitting mask.
  - If you need help finding social services, or essential items like food and medicines, call 2-1-1.

- **Separate yourself from others in your home.**
  - Do not have non-essential visitors.
  - Wear a mask if you need to be in the same room as other household members.
  - Bring as much fresh air into your home as possible. Open windows (if it is safe to do so) and use fans to blow air out or use air purifiers. See the California Department of Public Health's Tips for Reducing COVID-19 Risk Indoors (flyer) and the CDC Improving Ventilation in Your Home webpage for more information.
  - If you have to share a room, try to stay 6 feet apart from others. It is especially important to stay away from people who are at higher risk of serious illness.

- **Use a separate bathroom** or clean and disinfect touched surfaces of a shared bathroom after each use.

- **Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.**
  - See when and how to wash your hands. If you can't wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.

- **Clean and disinfect all "high-touch" surfaces routinely (at least once daily).**
  - Use household cleaning and disinfectant sprays or wipes. Be sure to follow the product label instructions.

COVID-19 treatment and seeking care

- If you have symptoms, ask about COVID-19 treatment right away, even if your symptoms are mild. Treatment can prevent you from getting very sick. Many adults and some children qualify for free medicines, such as Paxlovid. The oral medicines must be started within 5 days from the start of your symptoms, so don't delay. Talk to your doctor or call the Public Health Tele-Health Service 1-833-540-0473 – open 7 days a week, 8:00 am – 8:30 pm. For more information, visit ph.lacounty.gov/covidmedicines.
- Stay in touch with your doctor and seek medical care if you have symptoms that concern you or that get worse. If you need help finding a doctor, call 211, available 24 hours a day.
- Call 911 if you or someone you know has emergency warning signs.

Emergency warning signs

| **Difficulty Breathing** | **Pressure or pain in chest** | **Pale, gray or blue-colored skin, lips, or nail beds*** | **Confused or hard to wake** | **Other serious symptoms** |

*depending on skin tone

Dealing with Stress

- If you need to speak with someone about your mental health, contact your doctor or call the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LAC DMH) 24/7 Helpline at 1-800-854-7771.
- Local mental health & wellbeing resources are available on the LAC DMH COVID-19 webpage and the 211LA webpage 211la.org/resources/subcategory/mental-health.
- More information, including a list of crisis hotlines, is available on the CDC webpage Coping with Stress. LA County residents have free access to iPrevail.com, an online mental health resource in English and Spanish. Features include on-demand chat with trained peer coaches, community support groups, and self-paced lessons to help with life's everyday stressors.

Additional resources

- ph.lacounty.gov/media/coronavirus/ website with resources in multiple languages
- California Employment Development Department website
- COVID-19 Safety Workers Rights in California pamphlet